

annual defined benefit excess plan disparity fraction for an employee benefiting under a defined benefit excess plan that is a section 401(l) plan is a fraction—

(i) The numerator of which is the disparity provided under the plan for the plan year, and

(ii) The denominator of which is the maximum excess allowance under § 1.401(l)-3(b)(2) for the plan year.

(5) *Annual offset plan disparity fraction*—(i) *In general*. For a plan year, the annual offset plan disparity fraction for an employee benefiting under an offset plan that is a section 401(l) plan is a fraction—

(A) The numerator of which is the disparity provided under the plan for the plan year; and

(B) The denominator of which is the maximum offset allowance under § 1.401(l)-3(b)(3) for the plan year.

(ii) *PIA offset plans*. In the case of an offset plan that applies an offset of a specified percentage of the employee's PIA, as permitted under § 1.401(l)-3(c)(2)(ix), the numerator of the annual offset plan disparity fraction is the offset percentage used in the section 401(l) overlay under the plan.

(6) *Annual imputed disparity fraction*. For a plan year, the annual imputed disparity fraction for an employee benefiting under a plan that imputes permitted disparity with respect to the employee under § 1.401(a)(4)-7 is one.

(7) *Annual nondisparate fraction*. For a plan year, the annual nondisparate fraction for an employee benefiting under a plan that neither is a section 401(l) plan nor imputes permitted disparity under § 1.401(a)(4)-7 is zero.

(8) *Determination of fraction*—(i) *General rule*. A separate annual disparity fraction is generally determined for each plan under which the employee benefits. Thus, for example, if two plans are aggregated and treated as a single plan for purposes of section 401(a)(4), a single annual disparity fraction applies to the aggregated plan.

(ii) *Multiple formulas*. If a plan provides an allocation or benefit equal to the sum of two or more formulas, each formula is considered a separate plan for purposes of this section. If a plan provides an allocation or benefit equal to the greater of two or more formulas,

an annual disparity fraction is calculated for the employee under each formula and the largest of the fractions is the employee's annual disparity fraction under the plan.

(iii) *Offset arrangements*—(A) *In general*. If an employee benefits under two plans taken into account under paragraph (a)(3) of this section as described in paragraph (b)(8)(iii)(B) or (C) of this section, the employee's annual disparity fraction under both plans is the larger of the annual disparity fractions calculated separately under each plan.

(B) *Defined benefit plans*. The employee's employer-provided accrued benefit under a defined benefit plan is offset by the employee's total employer-provided accrued benefit under another defined benefit plan or by the actuarial equivalent (as defined in § 1.401(a)(4)-12) of the employee's total account balance under a defined contribution plan that is attributable to employer contributions.

(C) *Defined contribution plans*. The amount allocated to the employee's account under a defined contribution plan is offset by the total amount allocated to the employee's account under another defined contribution plan.

(iv) *Applicable percentages*. The disparity provided under a plan is determined on the base and excess percentages under an excess plan and the offset percentage under an offset plan, regardless of whether the employee's plan year or average annual compensation exceeds the integration or offset level under the plan.

(v) *Fractional accrual plans*. If a section 401(l) plan determines each employee's accrued benefit under the fractional accrual method of section 411(b)(1)(C), the numerator of an employee's annual disparity fraction is based on the disparity provided in the benefit accrued for the employee for the plan year.

(9) *Examples*. The following examples illustrate this paragraph (b). Except as otherwise provided, each plan is a section 401(l) plan.

*Example 1.* (a) Employee A benefits for the plan year under a defined contribution excess plan, Plan X, and a defined benefit excess plan, Plan Y, of the employer. Plans X and Y have the same plan year. Employee A benefits under no other plan of the employer

for the plan year of any other plan ending in the plan year of Plans X and Y. Plan X provides a base contribution percentage of 5 percent and an excess contribution percentage of 7 percent, thus providing Employee A with disparity of 2 percent for the plan year. The maximum excess allowance for the plan year under Plan X is 5 percent. Plan Y provides a base benefit percentage of 1 percent and an excess benefit percentage of 1.35 percent, thus providing Employee A with disparity of 0.35 percent for the plan year. The maximum excess allowance for the plan year under Plan Y is 0.75 percent.

(b) Employee A's annual defined contribution plan disparity fraction under Plan X for the plan year is 0.4 (2 percent divided by 5 percent). Employee A's annual defined benefit excess plan disparity fraction under Plan Y for the plan year is 0.47 (0.35 percent divided by 0.75 percent). Employee A's total annual disparity fraction is the sum of 0.4 and 0.47 or 0.87. Because Employee A's total annual disparity fraction does not exceed one, the plans satisfy the annual overall permitted disparity limit with respect to Employee A for the plan year.

*Example 2.* (a) The facts are the same as in *Example 1*, except that Plan Y is a defined contribution plan, rather than a defined benefit plan. Plan X and Plan Y cover the same employees and are identical in their terms except for the base and excess contribution percentages provided under the plans. Plan Y provides a base contribution percentage of 3 percent and an excess contribution percentage of 6 percent, thus providing Employee A with disparity of 3 percent for the plan year. The maximum excess allowance for the plan year under Plan Y is 3 percent.

(b) Employee A's annual defined contribution plan disparity fraction under Plan X for the plan year is 0.4 (2 percent divided by 5 percent). Employee A's annual defined contribution plan disparity fraction under Plan Y for the plan year is 1 (3 percent divided by 3 percent). Because Employee A's total annual disparity fraction (the sum of 0.4 and 1 or 1.4) exceeds one, the plans do not satisfy the annual overall permitted disparity requirements with respect to Employee A for the plan year.

(c) Plan X and Plan Y are aggregated for purposes of section 401(a)(4) and form a single section 401(l) plan. Under the plan, the base contribution percentage is 8 percent (5 percent plus 3 percent), and the excess contribution percentage is 13 percent (7 percent plus 6 percent). A single annual defined contribution plan disparity fraction is determined for Employee A for the plan year, the numerator of which is the disparity of 5 percent provided under the plan (13 percent minus 8 percent), and the denominator of which is 5.7 percent, the maximum excess allowance that applies to the plan. Because Employee A's only annual disparity fraction

of 0.88 (5 percent divided by 5.7 percent) does not exceed one, Employee A's total annual disparity fraction also does not exceed one. The plan thus satisfies the annual overall permitted disparity limit with respect to Employee A for the plan year.

*Example 3.* Assume the same facts as in *Example 2*, except that Plan X and Plan Y use different integration levels. Therefore, when Plan X and Plan Y are aggregated to form a single plan for purposes of section 401(a)(4), the single plan does not satisfy section 401(l). In applying the general test of § 1.401(a)(4)-2(c), the plan imputes disparity under § 1.401(a)(4)-7. Employee A's only annual disparity fraction is the annual imputed disparity fraction of one. Employee A's total annual disparity fraction is also one, and the plan satisfies the annual overall permitted disparity limit with respect to Employee A for the plan year.

*Example 4.* (a) Employee B participates in two plans: Plan M, which is a section 401(l) plan, and Plan N, which is subject to the general test under § 1.401(a)(4)-3(c). Plan M provides that the disparity provided an employee for the plan year will be reduced to the extent necessary to satisfy the annual overall permitted disparity limits. The employer wishes to impute permitted disparity under § 1.401(a)(4)-7 in order for Plan N to satisfy section 401(a)(4). Employee B's imputed disparity fraction under Plan N is therefore one, and Plan M provides no disparity for Employee B for the plan year. As a result, Plan M provides disparity that is neither uniform nor deemed uniform under § 1.401(l)-3(c); Plan M therefore does not satisfy section 401(l).

(b) Assume instead that Plan M provides that the annual overall permitted disparity limits must be satisfied without reducing the disparity provided for an employee under Plan M, thus requiring a reduction in the employee's annual disparity fraction under another plan. In that case, the disparity provided under Plan M would be uniform for the plan year and Plan M would continue to satisfy section 401(l). However, imputation of permitted disparity with respect to Employee B would not be allowed under Plan N.

(c) *Cumulative permitted disparity limit—(1) In general—(i) Employees who benefit under defined benefit plans.* In the case of an employee who has benefited under one or more defined benefit plans for a plan year described in paragraph (c)(1)(v) of this section, the cumulative permitted disparity limit is satisfied if the employee's cumulative disparity fraction, as defined in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, does not exceed 35.